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#### THE PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION CONGRESS.

The Proportional Representation Congress, held under the auspices of the World's Congress Auxiliary of the World's Columbian Exposition, met in the Memorial Art Institute in Chicago, August 10, 11 and 12, 1893. The following was the program of the congress :

THURSDAY, AUGUST 10, 10 A. M.

*Proportional Representation*, by Professor JOHN R. COMMONS, of the University of Indiana.

*Manhood vs. Property Representation*, by Mr. JOHN T. WHITE, of Chicago.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 11, 10 A. M.

*Ticino as an Object Lesson*, by Mr. W. D. McCrackan, of Boston.

*Effective Voting*, by Miss CATHERINE H. SPENCE, of Adelaide, South Australia.

*The Proxy System as a Means of Real Representation*, by Dr. MONTAGUE R. LEVERSON, of Baltimore.

*Solution of the Problem of Proportional Representation*, by Lieut.-Col. T. CURRIE, of Versailles, France.

2 P. M.

*Majority Myths*, by Mr. ALFRED CRIDGE, of San Francisco.

*The Gove System*, by Mr. WM. H. GOVE, of Salem, Mass.

*Proportional Voting in Caucus and Convention*, by Dr. L. B. TUCKERMAN, of Cleveland.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 12, 10 A. M.

*Referendum and Minority Representation*, by Mr. W. D. McCrackan, of Boston.

*Direct Legislation*, by Mr. STOUGHTON COOLEY, of Chicago.

Of all the good things accomplished through the means of the Columbian Exposition, few, if any, are of more importance than the calling together of the friends of reform in representation. For more than a generation there have been advocates of proportional representation here and there in the United States, but they have never felt themselves able to effect any organization to promote their reform. That, under such circumstances and in the exceedingly

brief period of time available, there should be brought together so many advocates of proportional representation shows how deeply the reform has taken root.

It was the desire of those having the arrangements in charge that all phases of the subject might be presented, and that after mature deliberation an American League might be formed whose membership should embrace Canada and the United States. Indeed, it was barely hoped that sufficient attendance from abroad might warrant the formation of an international society; but the time was so brief that members of the foreign proportional representation societies could not be got together.

It was also hoped that the deliberations of the congress might result in such harmonious action that the new league could present to the public a single system for their consideration. In this there was partial disappointment, as the committee which drew up the declaration of principles was compelled finally to present two systems. All were agreed that some form of proportional representation was the cure for legislative ills, but many differed in matters of detail. And while it would have shown a greater unity of purpose had one plan been agreed upon, the presentation of two plans may the better harmonize with the various political opinions in different parts of the country.

John R. Commons, Professor of Social Science in the Indiana University, presented in his address proportional representation as a whole. "We are a law-abiding people," he said, "yet the laws are made by a minority of the people, and by an irresponsible oligarchy more dangerous than that our fathers revolted against. The Congress which passed the McKinley bill did not represent the people. There was a Republican majority of three, but according to the popular vote there should have been a Democratic majority of seven. In the succeeding Congress there was supposed to be the most momentous upheaval in the history of American politics. The Democrats had a majority of 119 over all. But had the people been represented this majority would have been only 39. In the present Congress the Democrats have a majority of 79, whereas they should be in a minority of 28; the people's party should have 31 instead of 8; and the Republicans 152 instead of 129. To call our Congress representative is the essence of sarcasm. The same is true of every other law-making body in the land. To mention only one State: Indiana elects thirteen Congressmen. According to the popular vote they should stand seven Democrats and six Republicans. According to the gerrymander there were eleven Democrats and only two Republicans. In other words, every Hoosier Democrat whom you meet has an

influence on the legislation of his country equal to that of five and two-fifths Hoosier Republicans." Professor Commons advocated the Swiss system of representation as a cure for the present misrepresentation. "Proportional representation would bring into legislative assemblies able and experienced men, the true leaders of their parties and the people. In the first place, it would secure all the advantages of the English and Canadian practice of non-residency. The area of choice is widened. Representatives would be selected from an entire State without reference to residence or district lines. A party leader like McKinley or Morrison could no longer be excluded from Congress because he happened to live in a district where his party had the minority, or where a gerrymander had shelved him. So long as his party could command a single quota of votes of the State he would be their repeated choice. He would not be at the mercy of party factions and spoilsmen which happened to hold the balance of power."

Mr. White, in his address on "Manhood vs. Property Representation," pointed out the tendency of Americans to value property more than persons. While in theory we based our representation on persons, in reality property was the thing represented. One of the most persistent of the objections urged against the adoption of proportional representation is that it destroys local representation. Now, what is local representation? What does the Congressman represent who is elected from a particular district? The people of that district might have preferred as their representative a man living in some other district, but they were not given the opportunity of choosing him. Instead of the citizens of the State being allowed to choose anybody they saw fit, the representatives were apportioned among them according to the geographical lines of the State. Instead of men and ideas, the Congressmen represented territory and property. The remedy lay in wiping out the district lines, and allowing the citizen to choose anybody he sees fit to represent him. Mr. White favored the Swiss method of applying proportional representation.

W. D. McCrackan, in his address on "Ticino as an Object Lesson," had the advantage of presenting a supposedly impracticable principle with an actual working example before him. The friction caused in the little Italian canton by the unequal representation of the two factions led to open revolt against the government, and the feeling aroused was only allayed by the adoption of proportional representation. The system introduced has worked so well that two other cantons have adopted it, and it seems on the eve of adoption by the whole Confederation. "The system is that of the Free List, with local variations. Each party establishes its list of candidates, which

must be officially certified. Each elector has as many votes as there are candidates to be elected. No cumulation of votes is permitted, but provision is made for marking preferences. In counting the ballots the judges are obliged to ascertain the number of votes cast for each party and for each candidate, as well as to determine the electoral quotient. Each party elects as many representatives as it has received electoral quotients. If there are places left over after this process they are assigned to the party having the largest vote."

Miss Catherine H. Spence, who has been an advocate of proportional representation in Australia since the first publication of Thomas Hare's method a generation ago, presented a slightly modified form of the original system. "Briefly, the single transferable vote may be thus described. The districts having been made large enough to return eight or ten members, the voter is allowed to vote for as many men as he would like to see in Parliament, but the vote only counts for one, and that the first man on his list who needs his vote and can use it. It is like the subscriber sending a list of six books to the circulating library by a messenger—he having only a right to a single book. He writes the names of the books in the order of his preference, and the first on the list which can be got the messenger brings. He does not expect more than one book, and in like manner, though the voter may have marked with the figures 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, the six names of men he approves of on his voting paper, his vote only tells for one man." At the conclusion of Miss Spence's address a test ballot was taken, the audience voting for six out of fourteen names presented on a ticket. The result made a great impression upon all, especially upon the members of the press.

Dr. Montague R. Leveson, in his address, "The Proxy System as a Means of Real Representation," presented a method which he had embodied in a draft for a constitution for Colorado in 1875, but which he has now temporarily abandoned for a simpler form of proportional representation, on account of the necessity of a secret ballot. Briefly stated, the proxy system consists in making the whole country over into a political joint-stock company, in which each citizen has one share. The citizen may give his proxy to a representative who in Congress votes not his personal vote as at present, but the number of proxies he holds.

Mr. Alfred Cridge's address, "Majority Myths," was composed mainly of statistics showing how wholly inadequate the present system is as a means of attaining a government of the people. The address, when printed in full, will furnish valuable material for the use of reformers. Mr. Cridge advocates the Hare system of proportional representation.

Lieutenant-Colonel T. Currie sought to present in his address such a refinement of the list system that there would be no waste. One point is to fix, before election, the number of votes necessary to elect a representative, which makes the membership in the Legislature vary according to the total vote of different elections. He would further, to obviate the waste of votes in unfilled quotas, allow the voter a secondary choice in candidates in other districts than his own. Hence, if there be in two districts or more minorities insufficient when taken by themselves to fill a quota, and thus secure representation, they may when united accomplish their desire. The address contained a number of other new points.

Mr. William H. Gove presented to the congress the system which bears his own name, and which has become familiar to the people of Massachusetts. It is a combination of the Hare and the Swiss system. Lists are prepared as in the Swiss, but only one vote is given; and if the man voted for does not need the vote it is transferred to the man on the list whom he has specified before the election. This method has the merit of great simplicity, though it lacks the flexibility of the Swiss system. The Gove system was one of those presented by the congress for the consideration of the people.

Dr. L. B. Tuckerman presented two methods of selecting officers and committees in conventions and other meetings. These methods when published in detail will prove of great value. The Cleveland method of choosing committeemen has been in use for some time among the labor organizations of Cleveland, Ohio, and would be of incalculable value in Congress at Washington.

In presenting the subject of the initiative and referendum, Mr. W. D. McCrackan took the ground that representatives would not always be faithful to their trust. If a certain number of citizens could by petition compel the Legislature to submit a law for the popular approval of the voters, more exact legislation would follow. While giving all possible credit to proportional representation, he still thought that direct legislation of the people would be desirable. Stoughton Cooley took the ground that if a majority of the legislators represented a majority of the people, as they certainly would under proportional representation, the referendum would be superfluous. While the referendum might in some respects be more exact, the waste of time would more than neutralize the gain. Representative government is simply a division of political labor and has the same merit that the division of industrial labor has.

On Saturday the American Proportional Representation League was formed. The Hon. William Dudley Foulke, of Richmond, Ind., was chosen president. Stoughton Cooley, of 22 Fifth Avenue, Chicago,

was made secretary and treasurer. An executive committee composed of one member from each State and territory of the United States and province of Canada is provided for in the constitution, but the committee has not been completed as yet. Any person in the United States or Canada endorsing the declaration of principles may become a member. The dues are one dollar per year, and entitle the member to the publications of the society. A bulletin is to be issued as often as the funds will permit, probably once a month. The committee presented two bills embodying the principle of proportional representation, the Gove and the Swiss systems. There was no hostility to either, but it was thought best to offer both. The object of the society "is to promote the reform of legislative assemblies by abandoning the present system of electing single representatives from limited territorial districts by a majority or plurality vote, and by substituting the following :

- " 1. All representatives shall be elected at large, on a general ticket, either without district divisions or in districts as large as practicable.
2. The election shall be in such form that the respective parties, or political groups, shall secure representation in proportion to the number of votes cast by them, respectively."

Chicago.

STOUGHTON COOLEY.

#### THE BETTERMENT CLAUSE OF THE LONDON IMPROVEMENT BILL.

It is of more than passing interest to the problem of municipal taxation to note the tendency which, considerably developed in America and in Germany, has recently re-asserted itself with marked force in the projected change of the system of municipal taxation in London.\* It is the principle that the burden of taxation should be distributed amongst those elements of the community who derive palpable material advantages from municipal activity. As illusory in its effects, and as unjust in its application as this principle may become when carried into most fields of municipal activity, its justification in the domain of highway improvements is hardly to be questioned.

The act in question is known as "*An Act to Empower the London County Council to Make New Streets and Street Improvements, etc.*" (56 and 57 Vict. Session, 1893.)† The measure is based upon the principle that these improvements "will be effected out of public funds, charged over the whole country, and will or may increase in value or

\* See the valuable essay of Dr. Victor Rosewater in *Columbia College Studies in Political Science* upon "Special Assessments; a Study in Municipal Finance."

† The history of this bill has been a peculiar one. Passed by the House of Commons, the Betterment Clause was thrown out by the Lords. Reconsidered in this form by the Lower House, the Betterment Clause was reinstated. A second time the House of Lords rejected it. The matter stands thus at present constituting a real grievance of the Lower against the Upper House.